



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>

Best Camera Settings for Landscape Photography



It's no wonder that landscape photography is so popular...

For starters, it's an accessible given that we're surrounded by landscapes big and small that we can photograph.

It also doesn't really require any special gear - you can take high-quality landscape photos with nothing more than your smartphone.

And compared to other types of [photography](#), landscapes are relatively "easy" to master. By that I mean a stone cold beginning photographer will likely have an easier time learning landscape photography than, say, [portrait photography](#).

Having said that, it's not as simple as pointing your camera at something pretty and pressing the shutter button.

I've put together a few suggestions to help you get better landscape photos. Follow along and see what you can do to take your landscapes to the next level.



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>

Sunrises and Sunsets



Getting an ideal shot of a sunrise or [sunset](#) is probably one of the most complicated landscape photography tasks.

Not only do you have to consider how to capture the gorgeous colors of the moment, but you also have very challenging lighting conditions to consider. That is, the sky is very bright and the landscape is very dark.

The first issue - getting all that great color to pop - is the simpler of the two tasks.

Mastering White Balance



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>



Your camera has various [white balance](#) settings, including auto white balance (AWB). When set to AWB, the camera essentially makes its best guess about how the colors should look.

In many situations, this works out okay. But when photographing a sunrise or sunset, AWB does a poor job of rendering the colors because its job is to remove color casts. That means that AWB actually minimizes the colors of the sunrise or sunset - that's not what you want!

Get around this by switching your camera to the daylight white balance preset.

The daylight white balance preset has a very subtle warming effect. Since sunrises and sunsets are usually dominated by warmer tones, this will enhance those tones ever so slightly.

If your camera doesn't have a daylight preset, you can also use the shade or cloudy presets. Each has a more significant warming effect than the daylight setting and will accentuate the warm tones present in the sunrise or sunset.

See how these changes to white balance impact a landscape photo in the video above from Professional Photography Tips.



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>

Overcoming Dynamic Range



The larger problem when shooting sunrise and sunset photos is that there is an incredible dynamic range - the range of light values in the image.

As noted earlier, the sky is quite bright at sunrise or sunset, but the landscape is very dark. Often the difference between these areas of brightness and shadow is too much for the camera to handle.

The result is usually an image that's well-exposed for the sky, but with a dark landscape (as seen above), or an image that's well-exposed for the landscape with a very overexposed sky.

There are a couple of ways to handle this situation:



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>

- Get a meter reading off the brightest area of the foreground landscape and shoot in RAW. This results in a photo that's close enough to a sky and foreground that's well-exposed that you can recover any lost details when you process the image.
- Use a reverse neutral density filter to even out the dynamic range. These filters have very little filtering power on the bottom so that the landscape is brightened up. At the top is more filtering power to bring down the brightness of the sky. And in the middle is the strongest filtering power, because at sunrise and sunset, the brightest area of the photo is at the horizon.

There's another way, though, that's a bit more involved but produces excellent results.

Take two shots of the exact same scene, one that's exposed for the sky and another that's exposed for the foreground (a process called bracketing). In post-processing, blend the exposures for a final image that's well-exposed throughout.

Any of the above methods will get you a much-improved final image, but I personally find that blending exposures is the best. See how to do that in the video above from First Man Photography.

Suggested Landscape Photography Camera Settings



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>



Every sunrise and sunset is different, so there will be a bit of trial and error when it comes to dialing in the settings that get you the best result. It will also take a lot of practice over the years to perfect your approach.

However, by dialing in the settings outlined below, you at least have a starting point from which to experiment each time you go out to shoot:

- **Exposure mode:** Manual
- **Drive mode:** Single shot
- **Aperture:** f/11
- **ISO:** 100
- **Shutter speed:** Varies
- **White balance:** Daylight, shade, or cloudy



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>



You'll notice that the shutter speed varies.

You'll need to set the shutter speed according to the lighting for each specific sunrise or sunset. As noted above, this will take some trial and error, but with practice, you'll develop an understanding of where to begin with the shutter speed so you can perfect it from there.

But beware!

If you're shooting handheld, ensure that the shutter speed isn't too slow. If it is, you could induce camera shake. A good rule of thumb is that if the shutter speed is slower than 1/30th seconds, put the camera on a tripod or boost the ISO so you can use a faster shutter speed.

Indicating Motion



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>



There are instances in landscape photography when using a long exposure to show motion enhances the impact of the shot.

Blurring the motion of a waterfall or river comes to mind, as does blurring the movement of clouds or stars, as seen in the image above.

The most important camera setting when capturing motion is [shutter speed](#).

As a result, shutter speed should be the first exposure setting that you select. Then choose an aperture and ISO value to get a well-exposed shot.

Suggested Landscape Photography Camera Settings



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>



Again, these settings are just a rough guide for where you should start. You'll need to do some fine-tuning based on the specific shooting conditions.

- **Exposure mode:** Manual
- **Drive mode:** Single shot
- **Aperture:** f/16
- **ISO:** 50 or 100
- **Shutter speed:** 1/4th seconds
- **White balance:** Varies

There are a few caveats with these suggested settings.



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>

First, if you have a camera remote, single shot is the ideal drive mode. If you don't have a camera remote, use your camera's self-timer. Set a timer of at least 2-3 seconds, that way any vibrations you cause by pressing the shutter button will dissipate by the time the shutter fires.



Second, the shutter speed used will depend on the speed of the motion you wish to capture. For example, a fast-moving waterfall might only need a 1/4th seconds shutter speed to get good blur. But a slow-moving creek might require one second or more to get a blurry effect.

Lastly, the white balance setting you use will depend on the lighting. If it's near sunrise or sunset, try daylight, shade, or cloudy as discussed earlier. If it's during the daytime, in broad daylight, AWB might do the trick. If it's shady or cloudy, give the shady and cloudy presets a try.

Mastering Depth of Field



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>



One of the most central components of landscape photography is getting the depth of field right.

If we're to define depth of field, it's simply the area of an image that's in focus.

Typically, landscapes benefit from a very deep depth of field, that way everything in the scene from the foreground to the background is in sharp focus.

In the image above, notice how everything from the rocks to the flowers to the distant mountains is all in focus. That's due to the deep depth of field.

The depth of field is impacted by a variety of factors. You can explore that topic in depth in this guide.

To simplify things, as long as you use a wide-angle lens, set a small aperture (i.e. $f/11$ or smaller), and set your focus point about one-third of the way into the image, your depth of field should be more than sufficient for sharpness of focus from front to back. See this technique in action in the video below by Professional Photography Tips:



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>

Suggested Landscape Photography Camera Settings

The key to maximizing depth of field is to use aperture priority mode (A or AV on your camera's dial).

Aperture priority mode prioritizes [aperture](#) so that when you set the aperture to the desired setting, the camera automatically chooses a shutter speed to get a good exposure. That's advantageous for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that you only have to worry about one exposure setting as opposed to all three when you shoot in manual mode.

You can learn more about aperture priority mode in this tutorial if you're unfamiliar with it.



- **Exposure mode:** Aperture Priority
- **Drive mode:** Single shot
- **Aperture:** f/8
- **ISO:** 100



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>

- **Shutter speed:** Determined by the camera
- **White balance:** Varies
- **Focus mode:** Manual

The trick here is to use manual focus and set your focal point at one-third up from the bottom of the frame, as shown in the video above.

The reason this focusing technique works is because depth of field extends further behind the point of focus than in front of it. By setting your focal point at the one-third point, you'll get good focus in front and extending behind that point for a sharp image from front to back.

The Best Landscape Photography Lenses

To get the best landscape photos, it's not enough to understand the camera settings for landscapes. You also need good glass to capture landscapes in the sharpest detail.

Here are a few top landscape photography lenses for Canon, Nikon, and Sony camera systems.

Canon EF-S 15-85mm f/3.5-5.6 IS USM UD



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>



Built specifically for Canon's APS-C crop sensor cameras, the EF-S 18-85mm lens gives you excellent focal range to get wide shots as well as more tightly framed images of smaller details in the landscape.

And with a 4-stop image stabilization system, you can shoot handheld without as much worry of camera shake.

Key Features:

- Full-time manual focus override
- Fast and quiet ultrasonic motor
- Super spectra lens coating to minimize ghosting and flare
- Produces excellent contrast and colors

Canon EF 24mm f/1.4 L II USM



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>



When it comes to high-performance prime lenses for landscapes, it's tough to beat the Canon EF 24mm f/1.4 L II USM.

Compatible with both full frame and APS-C cameras, this lens offers a huge f/1.4 aperture that allows you to shoot in low-light situations without boosting the ISO. That makes it an ideal lens for night photography and astrophotography.

Key Features:

- Circular aperture creates gorgeous background blur
- Excellent corner-to-corner detail
- Super-fast autofocus system
- Anti-reflective coating minimizes glare.

Canon EF 70-200mm f/4L IS USM



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>



The venerable EF 70-200mm f/4 L USM lens from Canon offers landscape photographers excellent focal range from standard to telephoto for creating detailed images of landscapes.

Since it's a Luxury line lens, this thing is an absolute workhorse, with dust and weather sealing that allows you to keep shooting, even when the weather isn't cooperating.

If you shoot with a full frame camera, this is an excellent lens for landscape photography.

Key Features:

- Quiet ultrasonic motor with nearly no noise
- Fast focusing for quick shots
- Fluorite UD lens coating for improved resolution and contrast
- Superb holding torque to keep overshooting at bay

Nikon AF-S 14-24mm f/2.8G ED



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>



Built for Nikon's full frame FX and crop sensor DX cameras, the AF-S 14-24mm f/2.8 lens offers fast performance with a wide-angle view.

The lens is known for its sharpness throughout the aperture range, and with the f/2.8 aperture, low-light landscapes can be photographed with ease.

Key Features:

- SWM motor that offers fast and silent operation
- Full-time manual focus override
- 14 elements in 11 groups
- Nano crystal coating reduces ghosting and flare

Nikon 24mm f/1.8G ED



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>



Introduced in 2015, the Nikon 24mm f/1.8G ED filled a niche for landscape photographers with full frame cameras that didn't need a f/1.4 lens (or didn't want to pay so much) but wanted something faster than f/2.

The result was a lens that was an immediate hit, with an excellent 24mm focal length that's not too short or too long - in other words, perfect for landscapes.

Key Features:

- Fast f/1.8 aperture
- 2 extra-low dispersion elements for improved sharpness
- Excellent contrast and colors with minimal chromatic aberration
- Rear focus mechanism for smooth and fast autofocus performance.

Nikon AF-S 70-200mm f/2.8G ED VR II



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>



For longer reach with a Nikon full frame or APS-C camera, there's few choices as good as the AF-S 70-200mm f/2.8G ED VR II.

Sure, it's a big, heavy lens, but it's incredible optical performance and sharpness can help you zero in on small details and make them shine.

Key Features:

- Large f/2.8 aperture
- 7 extra-low dispersion elements for vibrant, resolute images
- Minimal flare and ghosting
- Beautiful bokeh with 9 rounded diaphragm blades

Sony SEL 10-18mm f/4



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>



For Sony shooters that want an ultra-wide-angle view of landscapes, the 10-18mm f/4 lens is a good bet.

Built for Sony's E-mount cameras, this lens has gyroscopic sensors built in, giving it excellent image stabilization when shooting handheld. Paired with its high-precision glass, this lens produces highly detailed photos with excellent sharpness.

Key Features:

- Built-in Optical Steady Shot image stabilization
- Nearly perfectly circular aperture opening for pleasing bokeh
- Extra-low dispersion glass for improved optical performance

Sony 24-70 f/4 T FE OSS



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>



For Sony shooters with a full frame camera, a great landscape photography lens is the 24-70mm f/4.

This lens offers ideal focal range from wide-angle to nearly telephoto, meaning in many situations, it might be the only lens you need.

The Carl Zeiss optics are top-notch, delivering excellent image quality no matter what type of landscape you're photographing.

Key Features:

- Dust and moisture resistant
- Works with full frame and APS-C Sony cameras
- Aspherical lens elements minimize spherical aberrations

Sony SEL FE 24-240mm f/3.5-6.3 OSS



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>



Landscape photographers with a Sony mirrorless camera that want phenomenal focal range should take a hard look at the SEL FE 24-240mm f/3.5-6.4 OSS lens.

Ideally used with Sony's 7 series cameras, this lens is dust and moisture resistant with 10x magnification and built-in image stabilization. It's extra-low dispersion elements prevent ghosting and flare, while its 7-blade aperture produces beautiful bokeh.

Key Features:

- Linear motor drive for fast focusing
- 5 spherical elements for corner-to-corner sharpness
- Internal focusing, which keeps the physical length of the lens the same at all times

Wrapping It Up



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>



The great thing about landscape photography is that there are so many varied landscapes for us to explore and photograph.

The problem, of course, is knowing where to begin with our camera settings to get the best shot possible.

Though not every landscape will fall into the categories outlined above, at least you now have a starting point.

Re-read this guide if need be, grab your gear, and head outside to practice these techniques. I think you'll see a marked improvement in the photos you take!

Learn More:

[**When to Use \(and Not to Use\) a Polarizer**](#)



<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>

Photography Talk

Address: 6789 Quail Hill Pkwy Suite 723 Irvine, CA 92603

Website: <https://www.photographytalk.com>

Google site: <https://mgyb.co/s/pf4kE>

Google Folder: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1xcwEwMirDUUDI1-patt2ZvS33MXgl0up?usp=sharing>

Our Online Photography Informational Links:

<https://www.photographytalk.com/alternatives-to-b-h-photo>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/photo-shoot-vs-photoshoot>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/photography-jobs-places-hiring-near-me>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/best-camera-stores-15-best-places-to-buy-a-camera>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/top-10-cheap-laptops-under-500>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/adorama-review>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/mixtiles-review>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/best-photography-poses-for-men>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/make-the-most-of-your-dual-monitor-setup-with-these-simple-tips>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/how-big-can-i-print-iphone-photos>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/beginner-photography-tips/shutter-speed-explained>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/linkedin-profile-picture-tips>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/beginner-photography-tips/7356-a-beginner-s-guide-to-aperture-and-depth-of-field>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/beginner-photography-tips/13-free-apps-for-photographers>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/keh-camera-review-what-you-need-to-know>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7510-best-camera-settings-for-landscape-photography>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/landscape-photography/7582-when-to-use-and-not-to-use-a-polarizer>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/what-is-candid-photography>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/history-of-photography-timeline-from-start-to-present-day>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/top-pre-owned-nikon-cameras>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/blackmagic-pocket-cinema-camera-4k-review>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/best-laptop-for-photo-editing>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/rule-of-thirds>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/gimbal-stabilizer-for-mirrorless-and-dslr-cameras>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/b-h-photo-video-review>

<https://www.photographytalk.com/9-gopro-max-tips-you-need-to-know>